BULLETIN 357 SEPTEMBER 1936

CORNELL BULLETIN FOR HOMEMAKERS

PREPARED BY THE NEW YORK STATE COLLEGE OF HOME ECONOMICS AT CORNELL UNIVERSITY AND PUBLISHED BY THE NEW YORK STATE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AT ITHACA, NEW YORK. L. R. SIMONS, DIRECTOR OF THE EXTENSION SERVICE

A USEFUL SUPPLY OF KITCHENWARE

CAROLINE PRINGLE

Distributed by the ROCHESTER HOME BUREAU
55 St. Paul St., which is part of the
State Extension Service of Cornell University

PUBLISHED AND DISTRIBUTED IN FURTHERANCE OF THE PURPOSES PROVIDED FOR IN THE ACTS OF CONGRESS OF MAY 8, AND JUNE 30, 1914

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CAROLINE PRINGLE[1]

New homemakers can learn a great deal from women who have been keeping house for some time and have had experience in choosing and using equipment. Older homemakers are likely to have learned from experience that too much equipment is a burden, that kitchenware has a way of accumulating, and that most novelties are soon laid upon the shelf. Younger homemakers are likely to have had experience with new materials and with new utensils which are especially adapted to present-day stoves and cookery. From both the older and the younger women, therefore, much information may be gained which may help to prevent the weariness and the exasperation, to say nothing of the waste of time and money, that result from the purchase of inefficient kitchen equipment.

The young homemaker who wishes her kitchen work to be as easy as possible and her funds to cover as many of her needs as possible, will find a plan to be a great aid in buying her kitchen equipment. In the plan, those utensils which seem to be the most important for the kind of cooking that the homemaker will be doing should be considered first. For example, if the house is supplied with hot running water, a teakettle may not be an essential piece of equipment; whereas, if all of the water must be heated on the stove, two teakettles may be needed. Griddles, muffin tins, and waffle irons are all used to make hot breads, and it may be necessary to decide whether one such piece of equipment is sufficient. Money spent in unnecessary duplication cannot be used for other needed equipment, and money spent on equipment that is not needed is not available for other items that the young family needs and wants. Once having decided what articles to buy, the homemaker will concern herself with the quality of each utensil.

HOW THE LIST WAS MADE

To assist young homemakers in selecting cooking utensils, to advise their friends who wish to give practical gifts, and to aid older homemakers in weeding out unnecessary and poor equipment as well as in adding new, a basic list of small kitchen equipment has been prepared. Interviews with

[1]AUTHOR'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT. The writer wishes to acknowledge the advice of Assistant Professor Ella M. Cushman in the preparation of this bulletin.

160 homemakers in Ithaca, New York, who have been married less than six years, provided the basis for this list.[2] This list is given on pages 6 and 7.

The wide variation in the amount, kind, and cost of the equipment owned by this group of homemakers, and the reasons given for liking or disliking certain pieces, showed that there could be no standard set of kitchen utensils satisfactory for all homemakers. The needs of the individual situation chiefly determine the kind and quantity desirable. That certain pieces were especially well adapted to the family's particular situation and that they were made of a material which the homemaker personally liked for some definite purpose were the reasons most frequently mentioned by the homemakers for liking them. Hence, it seems practical for homemakers to base their choice on their own needs and on the uses to which the utensil will be put.

The utensils owned by more than one-half of the families interviewed were used as a background for the following list (pages 6 and 7). The numbers suggested in the second column are the numbers owned by a large proportion of the young families. Some families owned much more equipment than is included in the list, others less. A few felt that they already had too much equipment, and some said that they would choose different kinds if starting again. All this, as well as the experience of the extension specialists in their work with many homemakers of the State, was taken into consideration in making the suggested list. Since this list is based on equipment owned by city homemakers, probably certain other utensils commonly used on a farm, such as canning equipment, should be added to the list for a farm homemaker.

HOW TO USE THE LIST

The list should be used as a guide only, and not as an inflexible plan for furnishing every young homemaker's kitchen.

In planning to buy equipment, a homemaker might use these pages as work sheets. In the extra space provided in the last column of the table she may make notes regarding the materials, sizes, and prices of the utensils which she is considering purchasing. It is much more economical to change one's mind on paper than after a purchase has been made. Since there is a wide range in the amount of money that can be spent for almost any kitchen utensil, adjustments can readily be made in plans before purchasing, in order best to meet the needs of the family. For the family which is going to move frequently, it may be more economical to buy the least expensive equipment and not attempt to move much of it, or to put more

[2]Small kitchen equipment used by 160 young families, Ithaca, New York, 1936. By Caroline Pringle. Thesis for degree of M.S., Cornell University, 1936.

money into those articles, such as knives, which can be moved easily. Another family may find it an economy to purchase a Dutch oven which although expensive in the beginning, may prove to be a saving in fuel and in preparing inexpensive dishes.

A homemaker might ask herself these questions to help in deciding which utensils it will be wise for her to purchase:

Are these utensils adapted to the kind of cooking that I shall be doing for the next five or ten years?

Shall I have a chance to get more equipment later or must I get it all now?

What pieces of equipment not listed here will I need?

Will I be happier with a few pieces of the most suitable equipment for a purpose, regardless of the cost, or with a larger amount of less suitable, and probably less expensive, equipment?

In which utensils will good quality mean the most to me?

With the money that I have to spend, what shall I buy first?

Can I, in any way, try certain articles before I buy so that I may be sure to get the ones that I will like best for various purposes?

Do I know what sizes of utensils, such as bowls, saucepans, skillets, coffeepots, and casseroles, will be best for my family?

Can I use many of the utensils on my list in several ways?

KITCHENWARE GIFTS

Kitchenware is a common gift to young homemakers. Since it can be a daily reminder of the giver, it should be chosen with such care that it will be a pleasant reminder. From one-third to three-fifths of the utensils owned by the 160 young homemakers interviewed had been given to them, which indicates that gifts are an important factor in the furnishing of a kitchen. These young women were as well pleased with their gift equipment as with that which they had purchased, but unfortunately they were dissatisfied with some of both kinds. They felt that they could make wiser purchases if they had an opportunity to furnish their kitchens again.

The following guides gathered from the experience of homemakers might well be kept in mind when planning to make gifts of kitchen utensils:

Think first of the friend who will receive the gift, of her home, and of the kind of cooking that she will be doing.

When choosing essential equipment, get the best quality, though not always the most expensive. It may be better to give a high-quality kettle cover that will fit a particular utensil owned, than a pan and cover of poor quality costing the same amount of money.

Whenever possible, give a more or less standard utensil; that is, one about which there is little chance for personal difference of opinion, unless there is no doubt about the friend's taste. Can openers, measuring cups, dover beaters, and rolling pins might come in this class. Do not give coffee pots unless your friend has stated just what model she prefers. Always try to find which materials she prefers if the utensil comes in several materials. People often have distinct preferences for enamel, glass, aluminum, or other metals.

To play safe, give articles which do not have wide variation in size, because homemakers' ideas of what is the right size for a utensil, such as a bowl or saucepan, are quite different.

Do not be afraid that a practical gift will be unattractive, for a well-made tool is usually attractive in line and design.

Find your friend's preferences if possible. Some persons do not mind being asked to state their preferences.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS IN BUYING COOKING UTENSILS

Some general considerations to be kept in mind when buying cooking utensils are the following:

Plan before buying anything. Think of the amount to be spent for the kitchen in relation to the other needs of the family. Also, remember the time and energy that a homemaker has to spend in keeping house.

When there is more than the minimum amount of money to spend, remember that it may be wise to invest in more durable and satisfactory everyday equipment than in a greater assortment or in duplicates of a cheaper grade.

Often it is wise to buy better quality in utensils used everyday than in those used occasionally.

Try to get durable materials and strong smooth construction, especially if buying high-priced equipment.

Buy duplicates of some articles, such as salt shakers and paring knives, which may be used at the different work centers. These may save enough steps to warrant the purchase.

Consider the amount of effort required to use a utensil. Especially think of the weight, sharpness of cutting edges, and comfort of handles in the hand.

Do not get too many utensils for the same purpose.

Try to select utensils that can be used in several ways.

Choose utensils that are easy to clean, care for, and store.

SMALL KITCHEN EQUIPMENT FOR YOUNG HOMEMAKERS

The items marked with an asterisk (*) were among those most commonly owned by the 160 homemakers interviewed, and perhaps for that reason may be considered the most important.

Utensil	Number suggested	Price range of items in two stores in Ithaca, New York, July, 1936	Possible expenditure for number suggested	Notes
	Number	*Dollars*	*Dollars*	
*Bowls, mixing	4	0.10– 0.50	0.40 – 2.00	
Bread board	1	0.20– 1.00	0.20 – 1.00	
Bread box	1	0.50– 1.37	0.50 – 1.37	
*Brushes	2	0.05– 0.10	0.10 – 0.20	
*Canisters for tea, coffee, and the like	4	0.10– 0.25	0.40 – 1.00	
Can openers	2	0.05– 2.50	0.10 – 5.00	
*Casseroles	2	0.35– 1.29	0.70 – 2.58	
*Coffee pots	2	0.35– 6.95	0.70 – 13.90	
Colander	1	0.20– 1.00	0.20 – 1.00	
Cups, custard	6	0.05– 0.10	0.30 – 0.60	
*Cups, measuring	2	0.05– 0.30	0.10 – 0.60	
Dish drainer	1	0.20– 1.19	0.20 – 1.19	
*Dish pan	1	0.40– 1.19	0.40 – 1.19	
*Double boiler	1	0.30– 2.65	0.30 – 2.65	
*Dover egg beater	1	0.15– 1.00	0.15 – 1.00	
Flour sieve	1	0.20– 2.50	0.20 – 2.50	
Forks	2	0.10– 0.65	0.20 – 1.30	
*Fruit-juice extractor	1	0.10– 0.12	0.10 – 0.12	
Funnel	1	0.05– 0.10	0.05 – 0.10	
Garbage can	1	0.50– 1.29	0.50 – 1.29	
*Graters	1	0.10– 0.75	0.10 – 0.75	
Grinder	1	2.25– 2.25	2.25 – 2.25	
Kettle	1	0.40– 1.75	0.40 – 1.75	
Kettle covers	2	0.10– 0.30	0.20 – 0.60	
*Knives, large	2	0.10– 1.00	0.20 – 2.00	
*Knives, small	2	0.10– 0.45	0.20 – 0.90	
*Pie pans	3	0.05– 1.00	0.15 – 3.00	
*Potato masher	1	0.10– 0.15	0.10 – 0.15	
Refrigerator dishes	2	0.10– 0.25	0.20 – 0.50	
*Roaster	1	0.30– 3.95	0.30 – 3.95	
*Rolling pin	1	0.20– 0.35	0.20 – 0.35	
*Saucepans, covered	3	0.40– 1.25	1.20 – 3.75	

Utensil	Number suggested	Price range of items in two stores in Ithaca, New York, July, 1936	Possible expenditure for number suggested	Notes
	Number	*Dollars*	*Dollars*	
*Saucepans, without covers that fit	2	0.10–0.85	0.20 – 1.70	
*Shakers, salt and pepper	2	0.05– 0.10	0.10 – 0.20	
Sieves, large	1	0.10– 0.20	0.10 – 0.20	
Sieves, small	1	0.10– 0.10	0.10 – 0.10	
*Sink strainer	1	0.15– 0.80	0.15 – 0.80	
*Skillets, large	2	0.15– 1.80	0.30 – 3.60	
*Skillets, small	1	0.10– 1.00	0.10 – 1.00	
Spatula	1	0.10– 1.75	0.10 – 1.75	
Spoons, measuring	1 set	0.10– 0.15	0.10 – 0.15	
Spoons, mixing	1	0.05– 0.25	0.05 – 0.25	
Spoons, wooden	1	0.10– 0.25	0.10 – 0.25	
Teakettle	1	1.00– 3.50	1.00 – 3.50	
Teapot	1	0.20– 0.79	0.20 – 0.79	
Bread tins	1	0.10– 1.00	0.10 – 1.00	
*Cake tins	3	0.05– 0.75	0.15 – 2.25	
Fancy tins and molds	1	0.05– 1.00	0.05 – 1.00	
*Muffin tins	2	0.10– 0.75	0.20 – 1.50	
*Toaster	1	0.10–12.00	0.10 – 12.00	
Turner	1	0.10– 0.49	0.10 – 0.49	
Waffle iron	1	1.85–14.50	1.85 – 14.50	
Waste basket	1	0.20– 0.49	0.20 – 0.49	
Total			16.65 to 108.06	
Other utensils				
Total				